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ABSTRACT

Phase 1 of this research project included summarizing available information concerning lower socioeconomic status (SES) rural youth. Phase 2 involved defining a research population, selecting a sample from that population, collecting and analyzing data, and comparing data to the summarized material available on lower SES youth. The population for the study was defined as Wisconsin youth in grades 5 through 8 living in rural counties where at least 2/3 of the population were rural residents with a median family income below $4000 per year. Of the 22 counties in Wisconsin meeting these criteria, Adams County was arbitrarily selected. The 176 lower SES respondents and 174 higher SES respondents in phase 2 of the study were equally divided as to sex. Instruments were designed to measure 3 characteristics indicative of SES: occupation of head of house, education of head of house, and family possessions. Style of adult leadership desired was also measured as were personal characteristics desired in a leader, organizational participation, and parental attitudes toward club membership. It was found that youth from lower SES families are different from youth from higher SES families in terms of such factors as personal and parental interests in club membership, desire for different leadership styles, and characteristics desired in a leader. Thus if youth leadership training programs are to be effective, they will need to emphasize socioeconomic group differences rather than simply youth leadership in general. (LS)

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Resource Report

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Researching Lower Socio-Economic Rural Youth

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Introduction

A 1965 National Extension Task Force Committee directed the Cooperative Extension Service to assist in meeting the needs of lower socio-economic rural youth. This required that basic information be provided about lower socio-economic rural youth relevant to developing and implementing programs in rural areas.

In 1964, a research project was designed to find how University Extension could provide such youth with informal educational opportunities. The project was concerned with determining:

1. Demographic characteristics of lower socio-economic rural youth.
2. The extent lower socio-economic rural youth participate in voluntary organizations, and factors related to their participation.
3. Style of adult leadership and personal characteristics desired in adult leadership by lower socio-economic rural youth.
4. Interest patterns of lower socio-economic rural youth.

Recommendations drawn from the data collected could then be used to help rural youth improve their socio-economic conditions.

The Research Problem

Considerable information is available concerning lower socio-economic youth in non-rural situations, but information about rural situations is very limited. Much of the research concerning non-rural lower socio-economic youth has application to similar rural youth. Some of it has limited or no application.

An accurate assessment of characteristics of rural youth has not been made because of a belief that differences between rural and urban youth no longer exist. Differences do exist. Rural youth are at a disadvantage in securing an education and competing for jobs. There are differences in school achievement levels, occupational aspirations, value orientations, and personality related characteristics.[1/]

If these differences exist between all urban and rural youth, they must also exist between urban and rural youth of lower socio-economic status.

Research Procedure

There were two phases to the research project. Phase one included summarizing available information concerning lower socio-economic youth. Phase two involved defining a research population, selection of a sample from that population, data collection and analysis.

The Population and Sample

(Phase Two)

The population for the study was defined as

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Wisconsin youth in grades five through eight living in counties which met the following criteria:

1. Rural - at least two-thirds of the population had rural residence (farm, rural non-farm, and villages and cities with population under 2500), as defined by the 1960 census.
2. Low median family income - 1960 median family income below $4,000. Median income was defined as the income point at which one half of the income of the county is above and one half is below the figure.

Of the twenty counties in Wisconsin meeting these criteria (Fig. 1), Adams County was arbitrarily selected. Youth in fifth through eighth grades living in Adams County, Wisconsin, were selected as the sample for the study.

Description of Adams County

Adams County has 7,566 population. The median age is 36.7 years.[2] There are two incorporated villages in the county, Adams (population 1301) and Friendship (population 560). All nine public elementary schools in the county are located in the Adams-Friendship School District

Sixty percent of the county's land area is in forestry and 40 percent is in farm land (of which less than one-third is cropped). In 1960, major sources of employment were: service, 40 percent; farming, 25 percent; manufacturing, 17 percent; and transportation, 11 percent. Most of the manufacturing workers and many service workers commuted to jobs outside the county.

Instrumentation
(Phase Two)

Development of Instrument for Measuring Socio-Economic Status

Three characteristics were used to measure socio-economic status: occupation of head of house, education of head of house and family possessions.

Occupation of head of house. - Respondents were asked to indicate the specific occupation of their father and for what company or organization he worked. If the mother worked outside the home, the same questions were asked of her occupation.

Occupations were classified according to Warner, Meeker and Eells' revised scale for rating occupations.[3] Points assigned the occupational categories ranged from 2 to 14. A tenant farmer, whose occupation was rated third from the bottom, received 6 points; a high school teacher was rated second from the top and received 12 points.

One adjustment was made in Warner, Meeker, and Eells' revised scale. Farm ownership was adjusted from a rating of 2 to a rating of 3. The original Warner, Meeker, and Eells' scale specified that businesses in rating "2" should have a minimum value of $20,000 to $75,000. In 1960 the average farm value in Adams County was $13,755, which put it considerably under the lower limit of $20,000. Farm ownership fit more realistically into category "3", businesses valued at $5,000 to $20,000.

Education of head of house. - Respondents were asked to indicate the highest school grade completed by each parent. Seven categories of educational level were used and points assigned for each level. A college graduate received 12 points, high school graduate 8 points, and eighth grade graduate received 4 points. Less than fifth grade category was assigned 1 point.

Family possessions. - Only those possessions that could be correctly interpreted by youth as young as 10 years of age were selected. Twelve family possessions were included on the scale and 1 point assigned for each possession.

A socio-economic score was determined by adding together the scores obtained from occupation of head of house, education of head of house, and family possessions. The maximum socio-economic score was 38 points.

Development of Leadership Style Scale

To measure leadership style desired in an adult leader, five youth group situations were used. For each situation, three alternative solutions were given, each representing a leadership style. The alternative leadership styles were democratic, laissez-faire, and authoritarian. The respondents were to select the one solution (leadership style) they perceived as most desirable. If a child responded to four of the five situations with a solution that was judged democratic, then he was considered desiring a democratic style of leadership. An undetermined classification was developed for those children not selecting three or more similar responses.

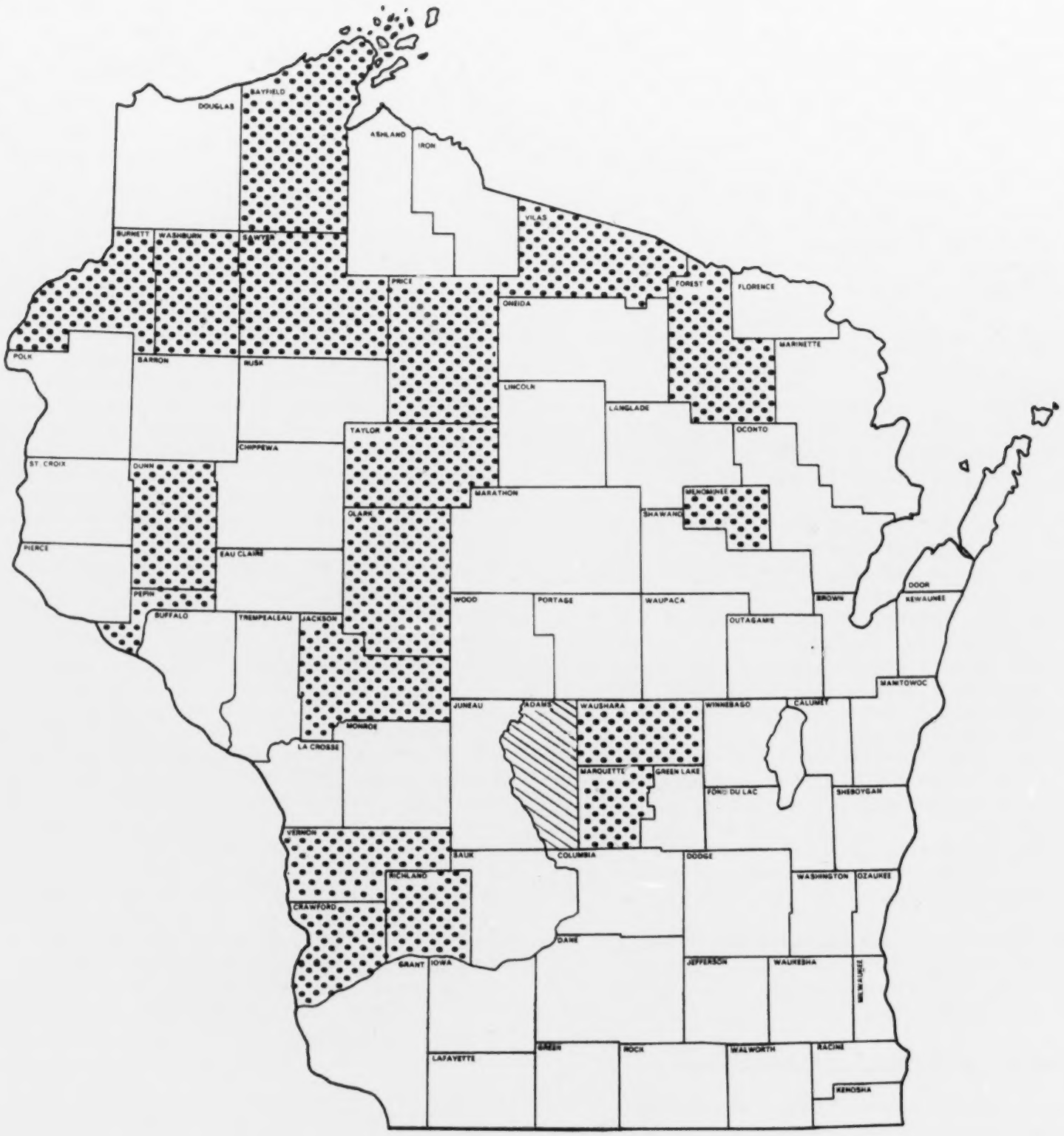

FIGURE 1 WISCONSIN COUNTIES COMPRISING THE STUDY POPULATION (ADAMS COUNTY, SOURCE OF DATA)

Development of Personal Characteristics Desired in a Leader Scale

Each respondent was asked to describe an adult he would desire as a club leader and indicate why he wanted this person. The description of the adult and reasons the child would like to have the adult as a leader were placed in six categories: (1) skills and talents; (2) social skills; (3) kindness, helpfulness; (4) respect for young people; (5) physical characteristics; and (6) authoritativeness. These categories were used by the Michigan Survey Research Center in a study they completed with youth and adult leadership for youth.[4/]

Development of Organizational Participation Scale

This index was based upon membership, attendance, and officerships in formal voluntary organizations (non-school and non-church). Points were assigned as follows:

a. Two points for each organization the respondent belonged to.
b. Two points for each organization if the respondent attended at least 90 percent of the meetings and activities of the organization.
c. One point for each organization if the respondent attended approximately one half of the meetings and activities of the organization.
d. No points for attendance if the respondent attended 10 percent or less of the meetings and activities of the organization.
e. Two points for each office ever held in the organizations to which the respondent belonged.

The total number of points constituted the respondent's organizational participation score. Scores were categorized into "none," "low" and "high" groups.

Development of Parental Attitude Scale

Each respondent was asked, "How do your parents feel about your belonging to clubs?" The respondent was then asked to check one of the following categories for the father and mother. The responses were interpreted as attitudes.

Response	Attitude
He (she) wants me to belong.	Positive
He (she) thinks it's okay.	Neutral
He (she) doesn't care either way.	Neutral
He (she) doesn't want me to belong	Negative
Deceased or not present	(Dropped from study)

Development of Interest Scale

The interest inventory questions were designed to find out the respondent's readiness to participate in group or individual activities related to Extension youth programs. A four point scale was provided for answering the interest inventory questions relating to areas of social interaction, community service, communications, outdoor living, mechanical skills, career exploration and biological science.

Data Collection (Phase Two)

The first data for phase two were collected in December, 1965. A socio-economic questionnaire was administered by teams of two interviewers on a group interview basis to all fifth through eighth grade students attending the nine public schools in Adams-Friendship School District. Questionnaires were administered by the teachers to those students who were absent. Four-hundred and fifty-six respondents completed questionnaires. A family possessions score was determined for every respondent. Where the parent's education or occupation was not known by the respondent, the information was obtained from the superintendent of schools, teachers or letters to the parents.

The range of socio-economic scores was 7 to 38 with a mean of 20.89. Higher and lower socio-economic groups were determined by excluding all respondents who had scores on the mean or one score on either side of the mean. Ninety-nine respondents (21.7 percent) with scores of either 20, 21 or 22 were excluded. Respondents with scores of 7 to 19 were judged the lower socio-economic status group (181 or 39.7 percent), and those with scores of 23 to 38 (176 or 38.6 percent) were considered the higher socio-economic group. The extreme lower socio-economic group scores 7 to 16 (85 or 18.6 percent and the extreme higher socio-economic group scored 26 to 38 (78 or 17.1 percent).

The second group of data were collected by interviewing the 357 respondents selected in December, 1965. A personal interview was administered to each of the 350 respondents (98 percent of the original sample) in January, 1966.

The Findings

Demographic Data (Phase Two)

There were 176 lower socio-economic respondents and 174 higher socio-economic status

respondents in the second phase of the study. The respondents were equally divided as to sex. Approximately 55 percent of the respondents were fifth and sixth graders, and 45 percent were seventh and eighth graders. Intelligence quotient scores showed 40 percent of both the low and high socio-economic status groups were in the medium IQ range (95-109) and another 40 percent were in the high IQ group (110 and over). The lower socio-economic status group had a slightly larger proportion in the low IQ range (under 95).

Residence

Place of Residence	Low Group Percent	High Group Percent
Farm	39.2	39.0
Rural Non-farm	33.5	19.0
Town or Village	27.3	42.0
	100.0	100.0

Interview Response

Higher socio-economic rural youth volunteered significantly more answers in an interview situation than did lower socio-economic rural youth.

Occupation of Head of House

Occupation	Points	Low Group Percent	High Group Percent
Unskilled, domestic laborers	2	4.0	0.0
Semi-skilled	4	36.4	2.3
Skilled, tenant farmers	6	28.4	17.2
Craftsman (own business) salesman, foreman	8	11.9	28.7
Small business owners, farm owners, minor business officials, contractors	10	11.9	40.2
Professional (teachers, nurses) accountants, owners of medium size business, managers	12	0.0	6.3
Professional (Lawyers, medical, ministers), owner of large business	14	0.0	2.9
Not determined	-	7.4	2.3

Education of Head of House

Grade Completed	Points	Low Group Percent	High Group Percent
Less than fifth grade	1	6.3	0.0
Fifth through seventh grades	2	11.4	0.6
Eighth	4	38.6	2.9
Some high school	6	27.8	14.9
High school graduate	8	11.9	54.0
Training beyond high school	10	0.6	15.5
College Graduate	12	0.6	11.5
Don't know	-	2.8	0.6
		100.0	100.0

Family Possessions

Possessions	Points	Extreme Low Group %	Low Group %	High Group %	Extreme High Group %
Electricity	1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Telephone	1	39.0	51.7	98.3	100.0
Automatic Clothes Washer	1	11.0	15.3	68.4	83.0
Television	1	95.0	96.0	98.9	100.0
Drinking Water in Home	1	80.0	82.9	98.9	100.0
Running Hot Water in Home	1	47.0	62.5	97.7	99.9
Auto - 1963 or Newer	1	25.0	26.1	66.7	77.0
Daily Newspaper	1	35.0	40.3	71.8	78.0
Stereo or Hi-Fi	1	33.0	39.8	74.1	78.0
Wall to Wall Carpet	1	11.0	16.5	33.3	38.0
Clothes Dryer	1	18.0	29.5	73.6	81.0
Fireplace in the Home	1	1.0	5.7	9.8	12.0

Number of Persons Per Household

Number of Persons Living in House	Low Group Percent	High Group Percent
2-3	9.09	8.64
4-5	27.26	34.42
6-7	26.14	43.10
8 or More	36.93	13.79
No Response	.58	.05
	100.00	100.00

Participation

Phase One. Youth from low income families participate in few organized groups. The only youth organization that had a high proportion of members from lower socio-economic families was the Boy's Club of America.[5]

In ten rural Wisconsin communities 4-H membership was found to be closely associated with high socio-economic families.[6]

Phase Two. In Adams County there was no significant difference in participation between rural youth of both socio-economic groups.

Number of Club Memberships

Number of Clubs	Low Group Percent	High Group Percent
None	50.6	39.7
One	36.9	45.3
Two or More	12.5	15.0
	100.0	100.0

Participation in Voluntary Organizations

Name of Club	No. of Members	Low Group Percent	High Group Percent
4-H	152	47	53
Little League	45	40	60
Boy Scouts	12	50	50
Cub Scouts	4	25	75
Girl Scouts	0	0	0
Others*	36	44	56
Total	249	45	55

*Includes baseball, bowling, Y.M.C.A., rifle, ski, Modern Woodmen (insurance)

Few youth were greatly involved in organizational activities, and many, especially from families of lower socio-economic status, were nonparticipants in any voluntary organized groups. Four-H was the only club readily available to farm and rural non-farm youth.

Factors Related to Participation

Influence of Family

Phase One. Considerable research supports the principle that participation by all family members follows a similar pattern.[7] Parent participation in community programs and interest in 4-H was closely associated with 4-H enrollment.[8] High participation by parents in community organizations was closely related to joining 4-H at an early age, staying in longer and carrying a larger number of projects.[9]

Phase Two. In the Adams County study, regardless of socio-economic status, parental attitude toward having children belong to clubs had more influence on children joining clubs than any other characteristic studied. Mothers' feelings were more related to participation of higher socio-economic youth. Fathers' feelings were more related to participation of lower socio-economic youth.

Characteristics which influenced participation in voluntary organizations by Adams County rural youth were:

- Parental attitude toward having their children belong to clubs
- Parents' participation in community adult organizations
- Parent's leadership in youth clubs
- Number of friends belonging to clubs
- Siblings' memberships in youth clubs
- Parents' previous membership in youth clubs
- Number of children in the family

Participation by lower socio-economic youth was highest when parents had belonged to youth clubs, when mothers had been 4-H members, and when youth attended church regularly. Participation decreased as the size of the family increased. Approximately one-third, of which 63 percent were nonparticipants, of the lower socio-economic youth were from families of seven or more children.

Participation by higher socio-economic youth was highest when other siblings belonged to youth clubs, when fathers belonged to several adult organizations, and when fathers had been 4-H members. Farm youth had higher participation than non-farm youth.

Family Characteristics

Phase Two. Several differences in family characteristics were observed between the two groups. Lower socio-economic status youth:

- Came from larger families
- Their siblings participated less in voluntary youth organizations
- Few parents had previous memberships in youth organizations
- Parents participated less in community adult organizations
- Parents were less interested in having their children join youth organizations
- Attended church less regularly
- More often had no religious preference
- Participated less in school clubs and activities

More of the rural non-farm youth and less of the village youth were from lower socio-economic families. Farm youth were divided equally in the lower and higher socio-economic groups.

Influence of Peers

Phase One. The influence of peers is a factor determining participation by youth in organized groups. Influence of friends was the most frequently given reason for joining Boys' Clubs of America.[10]

Another nation-wide study revealed that lower status boys of similar ages were less influenced by friends in joining groups than were higher status boys.[11] However, one-third of all boys in the study said influence of friends was the major reason for joining any organized group.

Phase Two. In Adams County the influence of peers toward nonparticipation was greater with higher socio-economic youth than the lower group (14 percent compared to 7 percent).

Desire for New Experiences and Recognition

Phase Two. In Adams County, regardless of socio-economic status, youth joined clubs to learn, to have fun, and to be with friends.

Reasons Given for Not Joining Clubs

Phase One. Nonparticipation is a result of various blocks to participation. The main reasons youth did not join 4-H were unavailability of a club and lack of interest in clubs.[12] Major reasons reported by adolescent age boys for nonparticipation were personal dislike for clubs and pressures on leisure time.

Lack of parent interest is closely associated with nonparticipation, inactive members and drop-outs. A higher percentage of boys' parents than girls' parents did not care or did not want them to join 4-H.[13]

Once in 4-H, a higher proportion of boys than girls from lower status families dropped out after one year. The costs of boys' projects were a cause of limited participation of youth from lower income families.[14]

Phase Two. Lack of transportation to meetings and parent disapproval were the main reasons given for not joining clubs.

Reasons Given for Not Joining Clubs in Adams County

Low Group	High Group
Lack of transportation	Not interested
Not asked to join	Lack of transportation
Costs too much	Parents do not approve
Parents do not approve	

When all youth were asked if they would like to join a club to which they had never belonged, over 70 percent responded affirmatively. More than 60 percent had never been asked to join any club. Four-H was most often indicated as the club they desired to join. One-half said it was not available to them.

Rural youth from lower socio-economic status families wanted to belong to voluntary organizations, and would join if clubs were available, if they were asked to join, and if their families would approve.

Likes and Dislikes of Participation

Phase Two. Regardless of socio-economic status, Adams County youth who belonged to clubs derived greatest enjoyment from the opportunities to learn through individual projects and educational and social group activities. Competition, rewards and meetings were least mentioned by both socio-economic groups.

A larger percentage of the lower socio-economic youth liked individual projects. A larger percentage of higher socio-economic youth liked group activities. Lower socio-economic youth disliked their relationship with peers in the club to a greater degree than did higher group youth.

Club meetings were indicated as the aspect most disliked, regardless of socio-economic status. Comments about club meetings included: poorly planned, nothing accomplished, lack of order and noisy.

Club Characteristics Desired by Adams County Youth

Phase Two. No significant difference appeared between lower and higher socio-economic status rural youth concerning organizational aspects they desired in a hypothetical youth club. The average youth desired both sexes in a club of 23 members whose ages spanned six years. He desired to meet every two weeks in a community hall or in homes of members and would like at least one of his parents to attend most of the club meetings.

Four-H members and non-4-H members desired different characteristics in a club:

1. Four-H members wanted larger clubs.
2. Four-H members wanted to meet in community buildings; nonmembers desired to meet in homes.
3. Four-H members wanted to meet monthly; nonmembers wanted to meet more often.
4. Over 75 percent of the youth preferred heterosexual clubs.

Interests

Phase One. Interest may be defined as a "desire to be concerned with an activity or object." Educators working with young people in both formal and informal settings have long recognized the importance of using the interests of the students themselves as a motivation for learning. The study of the learner's interests is a method of establishing educational objectives.[15] "The learner learns only those things which he does. If the school situations deal with matters of interest to the learner, he will actively participate in them and thus learn to deal effectively with these situations." Knowledge of the interests of young people is especially important for the professional or volunteer youth worker who operates outside the formal school.

Environment plays a dominant role in the type and range of interests for any given age level.[16] Since interests are acquired, they are determined by what is possible to be interested in. Rural life may offer fewer interests for youngsters while allowing them more freedom in their choice of interests.[17] Harrochs states that, "Rural life permits the child reared in the country much freer expression, whereas city life, despite its occasional provision of greater opportunity for group activity, tends to be restrictive."

Lower class children in the eleven year old age range are an insecure group, often staying at home or near home even when their parents are not there to supervise them.[18] Volberding comments that, "The patterning according to socio-economic status of the family indicated that the middle class and upper lower class children were far more active and adventurous in their out of school living than were the lower lower class children." The lower lower class child is inhibited because of insecurity which arises from the lack of status of his family group in the community and the lack of social contacts of his parents. These lacks affect the child's social experience and confidence.

Duxbury suggests that youth from low income families are more handicapped than youth of higher status by a lack of opportunities, experiences and general background knowledge. Rural youth from low income families are even more handicapped because of their isolated living conditions. A different approach may be needed to involve low socio-economic youth in Extension youth programs.

1. Youth of the low income group require simple, short-term, active, visual, and physical types of projects and activities.
2. Youth need new or additional types of activities, projects, and programs to augment those now being offered.
3. Youth from low income families need a variety of educational experiences to broaden their background knowledge of the community and the world around them.
4. They need additional guidance to raise their aspirations for continuing education, in seeking higher levels of occupational choice, and in preparation for living in larger communities for further schooling and work.

Phase Two.

Areas of Most Interest Found in Adams County

(Rankings of interest areas which were checked "much interest" by at least 65 percent of one of the socio-economic groups)

Interest Area	Lower SES %	Lower SES Rank	Higher SES %	Higher SES Rank
Meet new friends	84	1	84	1
Play in a team sport	71	2	76	6
Visit a university	69	3	80	3
Go on an overnight hike	68	4	79	4
Go on a picnic	66	5	77	5
Learn to build a shelter in the woods	66	5	67	10
Work with others on projects	65	7	81	2
Go to an institutional camp	58	10	76	6
Learn to cook outdoors	61	9	72	8
Show animals in a contest	62	8	71	9
Learn proper animal feeding	54	11	67	10
*Mechanical skills (girls)				
Learn a new recipe	90	1	81	1
Learn to thread a sewing machine	68	3	72	2

Make a dress for yourself	71	2	59	3
*Mechanical skills (boys)				
Make something of wood for use in the home	69	1	58	2
Learn to use a hammer and saw	65	2	80	1

*The responses of boys and girls were ranked separately in the mechanical skills interest category, because the items were of more interest to one sex than the other.

Social Interaction

Phase One. Schools have an obligation to help lower socio-economic status youngsters to better accomplish the developmental task of social adjustment.[19] Upward social mobility is as dependent on social skills as on economic skills. Lower class youth must learn many middle class social skills in school. Non-academic activities such as clubs, parties, student government, athletics, music, arts, etc., must also offer the lower socio-economic status students an opportunity to learn social skills.

Phase Two. A greater number of higher socio-economic status youth in the Adams County study were interested in the following social interaction areas:

a. Work with others on projects
b. Learn a new indoor game
c. Be elected to office
d. Compete against others
e. Conduct a business meeting

There was no difference between the two groups in the following areas:

a. Meet new friends
b. Play in a team sport
c. Act in a play
d. Learn square dancing
e. Perform in a talent show

Higher socio-economic girls were more interested in social interaction than boys. Four-H members were more interested in social interaction than nonmembers. Higher socio-economic youth were more interested in social interaction than the lower group, and their interest increased with age. The lower socio-economic status respondent's interest declined with increasing age.

Community Service

Phase Two. There was no difference between the higher and lower socio-economic status groups in community service interest areas:

a. Plant trees and shrubs in your school yard
b. Pick up trash on the roadside near your school
c. Paint and fix up your family mail box

Younger children of both groups were more interested in community service activities than the older respondents. More interest in community service activities was shown by farm youth of higher socio-economic status than by rural non-farm and urban respondents.

Communications

Phase Two. No significant difference was found between the higher and lower socio-economic status groups in communication interest areas:

a. Write a story for a contest
b. Demonstrate how to plant a tree
c. Enter a public speaking contest
d. Give a talk to your class in school

Girls of lower socio-economic status were somewhat more interested in communications than the lower group boys. Respondents in the higher socio-economic status group showed a significant decline in communication interest as they increased in age from ten to fourteen. This tendency was not noted among lower socio-economic respondents.

The greatest difference between high and low socio-economic status respondents' communication interests were items related to public speaking and speaking in a classroom situation. On both items a larger percentage of the higher socio-economic status respondents indicated more interest.

Outdoor Living

Phase Two. A greater number of higher socio-economic status youth were interested in:

a. Learning to cook outdoors
b. Going to an institutional camp

There was no difference between the two groups in:

a. Going on an overnight hike
b. Going on a picnic
c. Learning to build a shelter in the woods
d. Learning to pitch a tent

Respondents of both socio-economic groups generally expressed much interest in activities related to outdoor living. Boys expressed a little more interest in this area than girls. Lower socio-economic status boys were significantly more interested than the girls. Older respondents of higher socio-economic status were also more interested in outdoor living activities than the younger children. Lower socio-economic status youth had less interest in institutional camping.

Higher socio-economic status respondents in the higher IQ range expressed more interest in outdoor living activities than the lower and medium IQ respondents.

Mechanical Skills

Phase One. Sullivan found that low status boys preferred outdoor and mechanical activities and rejected pursuits which require social contact, literary and scientific activity, or office work.[20] Low status girls preferred low status jobs and showed less interest in human contact in the type of jobs they preferred. Both groups were less active in school and participated less in recreation that was relatively expensive.

Age is also one of the chief determinants of interests for young people.[21] "Interests develop from the simple and active in young children to the more complex and social in adolescents."

Phase Two. In the Adams County study, no difference was found between the higher and lower socio-economic status groups in the following interest areas:

a. Make something of wood for use in the home
b. Learn to do electrical wiring
c. Clean an electric motor
d. Learn to develop camera film
e. Learn to use a hammer and saw
f. Make a shirt for yourself

Both boys and girls expressed much interest in learning mechanical skills of a typically masculine or feminine nature. Boys expressed more interest in mechanical skills at ages ten and eleven than at ages thirteen and fourteen. Girls of 13 and 14 were more interested in mechanical skills than younger girls. A greater number of higher socio-economic status girls than lower socio-economic status girls were interested in making something out of wood for use in the home. Little interest in learning mechanical skills was noted in higher socio-economic status youth who had dropped out of 4-H work.

There was no difference between higher and lower socio-economic girls in the following interest areas:

a. Learn a new recipe
b. Learn to thread a sewing machine
c. Make a dress for yourself

Biological Sciences

Phase Two. No significant difference was found between the higher and lower socio-economic status groups for all biological science interest areas:

a. Showing animals in a contest
b. Learning proper animal feeding
c. Gardening
d. Taking care of a lawn
e. Growing corn
f. Testing soil

Higher socio-economic status boys expressed more interest in biological science related activities than the girls. Boys in lower socio-economic status groups expressed only slightly more interest than girls. Older respondents of lower socio-economic youth expressed less interest in biological science.

Both the low and high socio-economic groups expressed more interest in animal related activities than they did in plants. More higher socio-economic status respondents expressed interest in animal projects. A greater percentage of the lower socio-economic status group showed interest in plant related activities.

A large amount of interest was reflected by both groups in all biological science items except testing soil.

Career Exploration

Phase One. A study of the impact of social classes on adolescents reports that the lower social level youth have the highest percentage of indecision about vocational aims.[22] Riesmann claims, "There are varied motives for education among the deprived. The average deprived person is interested in education in terms of how practical and useful it can be to him. Education provides the means for more and different kinds of employment, and provides a more secure future.

". . . the underprivileged person is much more oriented to the vocational, in contrast to the academic aspect of education. The underprivileged person also desires education because it enables him to cope better with the every day problems of a complex society."[23]

Duxbury found substantial evidence indicating farm youth have lower aspiration levels than rural non-farm youth and urban youth in similar low income situations. Rural youth, regardless of income level, have lower aspirations for college than urban youth and more indecisions about vocational choice due to:

a. Low levels of educational attainment
b. Low quantity and quality of financial resources available
c. Low educational attainment and aspirations of their parents
d. Less constructive counselling from parents
e. Lack of job opportunities and alternatives
f. Going to work at a younger age
g. Lack of experience in life
h. Lack of information, preparation, and learning for job opportunities
i. Limited reference groups

Phase Two. In Adams County, no significant differences were found between the two groups in all career exploration interest areas. There was more interest among respondents of both groups in learning about professional and white collar skills. Both low and high socio-economic status respondents gave first choice to visiting a university and second choice to visiting a bank.

Boys of higher socio-economic status were more interested in career exploration activities than were girls. Lower socio-economic respondent girls tended to express more interest in career exploration activities. Younger children in both the groups showed more interest in career exploration activities than the older respondents.

Leadership

Style of Adult Leadership

Phase One. There have been many attempts to determine which adult leadership style is effective with youth groups. Lippitt and White identified three leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire.[24] The basic difference between these styles is the location of the decision making function. It resides in the leader in the autocratic group, in the individual in the laissez-faire group, and in the group in the democratic situation.

Many authors do not see leadership delineated as such. Schmidt saw many gradations of leadership style, and he concluded that the style of leadership that a leader will use at any one time was affected by three kinds of forces: forces in the leader, forces in the group members, and forces in the situation.[25] "It is important to realize that there is no one leadership style which is best for all programs, but there are different leadership styles, each of which is most appropriate for a particular kind of program and that, by dint of a thorough understanding of the dynamics of the program, leaders will be enabled to select and develop that leadership style which is most appropriate."[26]

Duxbury in his summary of leadership literature for low socio-economic youth indicated that lower socio-economic youth have definite needs in a leadership situation.

Youth as individuals:

- Desire and need honest love and affection
- Have different values than those of the teacher, leader or institution serving them.
- Lack the ability to "listen" for long periods of time
- Fear failure in their work and learning experiences
- Desire to share responsibilities
- Desire rules and order that are consistent and firm
- Approve of authority when it is clear and applied uniformly

Youth as group members:

- Are usually withdrawn in a group
- Lack ability to develop their own leadership quickly
- Prefer leadership within their own group
- React more quickly to each other than to a leader
- Lack social leadership ability
- Show hostility at first and are apt to test the teacher's ability to handle situations
- Prefer physical patterns of communication (role playing)
- Prefer leaders:
  - Who have many ideas
  - Who are resourceful and who work well with a group
  - Who are friendly and interested in their situation and sincerely want to help
- Prefer a leadership style:
  - Which is masculine
  - Which is authoritarian rather than a democratic style of leadership

Phase Two. Contrary to previous research findings, the majority of Adams County youth wanted an adult leader who displayed a democratic style of leadership. Forty-six percent

of the lower socio-economic status group desired an adult leader with a democratic style compared to 53 percent of the higher socio-economic status group. Less than five percent of both groups wanted authoritarian leadership. More of the extreme lower socio-economic status than the extreme higher socio-economic status group wanted a leader with a laissez-faire style of leadership.

More lower socio-economic status girls than boys desired a democratic style of leadership. More lower socio-economic status boys than girls desired a laissez-faire style of leadership. Five percent of the lower socio-economic status group desired an authoritarian style of leadership. These differences were not evident in the higher socio-economic group.

Most extreme lower socio-economic status youth who desired a democratic leader were scored "low" in organizational participation. The smallest percentage of respondents desiring democratic leadership were in the "none" organizational participation category, and the largest percentage desiring an authoritarian style of leadership were in the "none" organizational category.

Within the lower and higher socio-economic status groups the largest percentage of youth who desired a laissez-faire style of adult leadership lived on farms. The highest percentage of youth in both groups who desired an "undetermined" adult leadership style lived in villages.

Approximately one-half of the youth wanted a democratic style of leadership.

For the lower socio-economic status group, the largest percentage of respondents that wanted a democratic style of adult leadership came from homes with the smallest number of people. The reverse was true for the higher socio-economic status group.

Personal Characteristics Desired in an Adult Leader

Phase One. The Boys' Club of America has conducted research on the characteristics desired in adult leadership. In a study of 14 to 18 year old boys (63 percent of the fathers of Boys' Club members were in low socio-economic occupation classifications), the qualities needed for leadership as viewed by the boys were good ideas, resourceful; works well with group; knowledge, skill; nice guy; popular, well liked; knows way around; strong, good fighter.

Phase Two. In Adams County no difference was found between the higher and lower socio-economic status groups for the following personal characteristics desired in an adult leader:

Kindness and helpfulness
Respect for young people
Physical characteristics
Authoritativeness as a personal characteristic

More higher than lower socio-economic status youth wanted an adult leader with specific skills and talents, and social skills. More extreme lower socio-economic status boys than girls wanted an adult leader with skills and talents in a particular area. More lower socio-economic status seventh and eighth graders wanted an adult leader with specific social skills than did fifth and sixth graders. No difference between grades was found within the higher socio-economic status group.

More extreme lower socio-economic status boys than girls wanted an adult leader with the characteristic of authoritativeness. This difference was not found within the extreme higher socio-economic status group. More lower socio-economic status youth who were or had been 4-H members wanted a leader with the personal characteristic of authoritativeness than did nonmembers. The smaller the number living in the extreme lower socio-economic status youth's home, the greater the percentage that wanted an adult leader with the personal characteristic of authoritativeness. For the extreme higher socio-economic group, those respondents with 5-6 people living in their home wanted an adult leader with the personal characteristic of authoritativeness most often, and those with 1-4 people living in their home wanted an adult leader with the personal characteristic of authoritativeness least often.

More extreme lower socio-economic status fifth and sixth graders than seventh and eighth graders wanted an adult leader with certain physical characteristics. No differences between grades were found within the extreme higher socio-economic status group.

Summary

General Characteristics

Youth from lower socio-economic status families are different from youth from higher socio-economic status families.

Lower Socio-Economic Status Youth in Adams County Differed in These Characteristics

They came from larger families.
Their siblings participated less in voluntary youth organizations.
Few of their parents had previous memberships in youth organizations, including 4-H.
Their parents participated less in community adult organizations.
Their parents were less interested in having their children join youth organizations.
Youth attended church less regularly.
More youth had no religious preference.
Youth participated less in school clubs and activities.

Low Socio-Economic Youth as Individuals

Forty percent were in the high IQ range (110 and over).
Forty percent were in the medium IQ range (95-109).
Fifty-one percent had belonged to or were members of 4-H clubs, while 41 percent were 4-H members at the time of the study.
Fifty-one percent of the youth did not belong to any clubs.

Low Socio-Economic Youths' Families

Fifty-one percent lived in homes with seven or more people.
Sixty-six percent had fathers who had eighth grade and some high school education
Sixty-five percent had fathers who were semi-skilled workers or skilled tenant farmers.

Low Socio-Economic Youths' Homes

Situated in rural non-farm (33.5 percent), farm (39.2 percent) and town (27.3 percent) locations.
Equipped with these facilities in the following order: electricity (100 percent), television (96 percent), drinking water piped into house (83 percent), hot running water (63 percent), telephone (52 percent), daily newspaper (40 percent), stereo or Hi-Fi (40 percent), clothes dryer (30 percent), car - 1963 model or newer (26 percent), wall to wall carpet (17 percent), automatic clothes washer (15 percent), fireplace in the home (6 percent).

Participation in Voluntary Organizations

All youth joined clubs to learn, to have fun, to be with friends, a desire for new experiences and recognition.

Lower Socio-Economic Status Youth Said That Their Reasons for Not Joining a Club Were:

Lack of transportation to meetings
Not asked to join a club
Costs too much
Parents do not approve of their joining

Factors Positively Affecting Participation of Low Socio-Economic Youth

Smaller number of children in the family
Parents' previous memberships in youth clubs
Mother's membership in 4-H
Church attendance

One half of all the youth in the study said that 4-H was not available to them, more than 60 percent had never been asked to join any club, and more than 70 percent said they would join a club if it were available to them.

Interest Areas

"Much interest" was indicated by at least 65 percent of the low socio-economic status youth in these interest areas:

Meet new friends
Play in a team sport
Visit a university
Go on an overnight hike
Go on a picnic
Learn to build a shelter in the woods
Work with others on projects
Make something of wood for use in the home (boys)
Learn to thread a sewing machine (girls)

Lower socio-economic status youth were less interested than higher socio-economic youth in the following social interaction areas:

Work with others on projects
Learn a new indoor game
Be elected to office
Compete against others
Conduct a business meeting

Lower socio-economic status youth were less interested than higher socio-economic youth in two outdoor living interest areas:

Learn to cook outdoors
Go to an institutional camp

Leadership

Leadership Style

A majority of youth in the study desired a democratic style of leadership. Lower socio-

economic status rural youth with 4-H experience or from smaller families perceived some need for an authoritarian style of leadership.

Personal Characteristics of a Leader

A majority of youth desired a leader who was kind and helpful. They desired least a leader with specific personal physical characteristics.

More higher than lower socio-economic youth desired a leader with the personal characteristics of social skills and skills and talents.

Lower socio-economic status youth desired a leader who possessed personal characteristics in this order:

Kindness and helpfulness
Skills and talents
Social skills
Respect for young people
Authoritativeness
Physical characteristics

Desired Club

All youth desired a club with these organizational characteristics:

Heterogeneous
Meet every two weeks in a community hall or member's home with one parent present
Approximately 23 members; six year age span

Conclusions and Implications

1. Differences do exist between lower and higher socio-economic rural youth. If youth leadership training programs are to be effective, they will need to emphasize socio-economic group differences rather than simply youth leadership in general.

2. Developmental tasks based on sex and age could provide guidelines for planning club activities and projects. Personal accomplishment and cooperation should be stressed. Individual competition should be avoided.

3. The upward mobility of lower socio-economic status youth is dependent on social skills as well as economic skills. The out of school club can provide a good laboratory for developing skill in social interaction.

4. Community service is a desirable trait in a democracy. This type of service tends to promote a feeling of involvement in community life for young children, and can improve the appearance or social climate of the community.

5. Training and encouragement in public speaking activities should start early and standards of performance should be adjusted so that younger children may have a satisfactory learning experience.

6. Because of costs, biological science projects would be more effective if they were based on working with plants. Food production, either for home use or sale through commercial channels, would be a good biological science project.

7. Career exploration activities should be part of a club for younger children. They desire to see and learn as much as possible about their world. Emphasis should be placed on giving children exposure to a wide variety of career areas.

8. Although lower socio-economic status rural youth did not perceive a need for adult leadership with social skills, and particular skills and talents, this does not imply that these youth do not need leadership with these two personal characteristics. Leadership for these youth might be most effective if adult leaders have an abundance of these two characteristics as they are challenged to help lower socio-economic status rural youth recognize the importance of these two areas.

9. Leadership style should be flexible. In general, a democratic style is preferable, but some youth perceive a need for leaders to display authoritativeness. Every youth leader should search out these groups and adapt a leadership style to them.

10. Opportunities provided for youth to participate in voluntary organizations are limited in rural areas. Only 4-H is readily available and competition from other youth organizations does not exist. Extension's role in working with the lower socio-economic status segment of rural youth is essential.

11. One of the major challenges facing leaders is changing unfavorable attitudes that many parents have toward their children belonging to voluntary organizations. An educational program for the entire family is needed. Parents need to be encouraged and motivated in developing a sense of desire and responsibility in participating in voluntary organizations.

Fact gathering for this report was done with the assistance of Mrs. Betty Burwell.

This report is based on evidence gathered by the following researchers:

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FOOTNOTES

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